

REMARKS

After entry of this amendment, claims 3-38 remain pending. In the present Office Action, claims 3-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Adams et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,898,636 ("Adams"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Applicants respectfully submit that Adams does not teach or suggest the combinations of features recited in claims 3-38. For example, claim 3 recites a combination of features including: "defining a global address space identifying a plurality of internet protocol (IP) addresses that are reserved for use in one or more virtual network environments". The Office Action alleges that Adams teaches the above highlighted features, referring to the virtual networks in Adams. While Adams does describe virtual networks for different loan syndication transactions, Adams is **silent** on how the virtual networks are formed/delineated. Thus, Adams does not teach or suggest reserving IP addresses for use in the virtual network environments.

Even if IP addresses were used as part of the virtual network structure, that still would not teach or suggest that the IP addresses were reserved for use in one or more virtual network environments. Rather, absent teachings in the art, the IP addresses would still be used in the normal fashion in the overall network. Other identifying information would be used to include a user in a given virtual network.

Adams teaches that "Any bank or financial institution can be connected to any other entity via a 'virtual link' that is established only for a limited time, such as the loan offering period or the loan offering period through the time of closing of the loan followed by the period the loan remains outstanding. These banks become 'associate banks' which are authorized by the network service company and the lead bank to access loan offering information by way of the network service provider service. Individuals within associate banks and other external organizations are issued passwords or other access codes which give them access only to those memoranda that are approved by their institution and the lead bank. The term 'virtual link' is used to connote a system in which

the user has essentially direct access using a password or other codes but which can be readily terminated by canceling the access codes." Accordingly, it appears that identification on, and access to, the network is established using a password or other access code. The access code identifies the user on the virtual network, and thus there is no reason to assume that an IP address is used to identify the user. In fact, multiple users at a given associate bank may have the same IP address for network communication (e.g. via the use of a firewall, commonly employed for connection to the Internet), and thus would be indistinguishable via the IP address at the network service provider. However, since Adams teaches discriminating among individual users from a given bank, the identity of the individual user must be used to determine which virtual networks that user has access to.

Additionally, claim 3 recites "assigning a first IP address of the plurality of IP addresses to a first application; assigning a second IP address of the plurality of IP addresses to a second application". The Office Action asserts that assigning IP addresses to entities on a network is inherent in a network. As highlighted below, the use of IP addresses is not inherent on a network. Furthermore, in typical IP address usage on typical networks, IP addresses are assigned to computers on the network, not to applications. Accordingly, even if assigning IP addresses to entities on the network were inherent, that would still not teach or suggest "assigning a first IP address of the plurality of IP addresses to a first application; assigning a second IP address of the plurality of IP addresses to a second application".

Furthermore, the Office Action alleges "It is well known in the communication art that if two IP addresses are to be isolated, they should be assigned to different network environments so that the two applications associated with the IP addresses are separated" (Office Action, page 3, lines 5-7). Applicants once again renew the traversal of this allegedly well known statement. Specifically, Applicants traverse the allegation that using different network environments for isolation is well known, and request evidence to support the allegation.

The Office Action further uses an example of isolating the same postal address (401 Dulany Street) by assigning them to different counties. Applicants respectfully submit that the manner in which the Post Master distinguishes postal addresses is completely irrelevant to the technology of networking computers. The post office art is not even remotely analogous to the art of networking computers, and can not be used to support a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Applicants respectfully submit that the use of IP addresses is not inherent in network communication. While the TCP/IP suite is widespread and dominant in networking, it is not the only protocol. For a feature to be inherent in the prior art, it must be the only way for the prior art to function. The use of IP addresses is not the only way for a network to function.

Applicants respectfully submit that Adams does not present a *prima facie* case of obviousness of claims 3-38. One element of a proper *prima facie* case is that the prior art must teach or suggest each and every feature of the claim. The present Office Action relies heavily on alleged inherency and alleged well known features, identifying very little support for the rejection in Adams. Applicants respectfully submit that the reasoning in the present Office Action is insufficient to present a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

For at least all of the above stated reasons, Applicants submit that claim 3 is patentable over the cited art. Claims 15 and 27 each recite combinations of features including features similar to those highlighted above, and thus are patentable over the cited art for at least the above stated reasons as well. Claims 4-14, being dependent from claim 3, are similarly patentable over the cited art for at least the above stated reasons as well. Claims 16-26, being dependent from claim 15, are similarly patentable over the cited art for at least the above stated reasons as well. Claims 28-38, being dependent from claim 27, are similarly patentable over the cited art for at least the above stated reasons as well. Each of claims 4-14, 16-26, and 28-38 recites additional combinations of features not taught or suggested in the cited art.

Applicants disagree with the allegation that the features of claim 4 would be obvious, as the allegation relies on the same allegedly well-known features and teachings of Adams used for claim 3. Thus, the rejection of claim 4 fails as well.

Applicants once again respectfully traverse that "It is well known that whether an IP address is virtual or physical is dependent on the environment the IP address is in" (Office Action, page 3, lines 4-5 from the bottom) and request evidence of the allegation. Furthermore, even if the well known statement is true, no motivation to combine the allegedly well known teachings has been shown and Applicants submit that such teachings, in combination with Adam's teachings still would not teach or suggest the combinations of features recited in claims 5, 6, and 8.

With regard to claim 7, the Office Action states that it "merely sets forth the definition of the global address space". Irrespective of the correctness of this statement, the first Office Action did not illustrate why the features recited in claim 7 are allegedly taught in the cited art. Accordingly, the rejection fails to provide a *prima facie* case of obviousness of claim 7.

With respect to claims 9 and 10, the Office Action uses the contents of other claims to allege obviousness. It is improper to use the other claims to find a claim obvious, as such other claims are not prior art. Accordingly, the rejection fails to provide a *prima facie* case of obviousness of claims 9 and 10.

With regard to claim 11, the Office Action states that it "merely defined what the netmask and subnet are with respect to an application." Irrespective of the correctness of this statement, the first Office Action did not illustrate why the features recited in claim 11 are allegedly taught in the cited art. Accordingly, the rejection fails to provide a *prima facie* case of obviousness of claim 11.

With respect to claims 12-14, the Office Action states that "it is obvious that whether or not the applications are able to communicate with each other is dependent on the capability of their associated IP addresses". Applicants respectfully traverse. The Office Action did not cite art that illustrates IP addresses having different "capabilities". Accordingly, the rejection fails to provide a *prima facie* case of obviousness of claims 12-14.

The Office Action also asserts that no further method steps are recited in the dependent claims. Applicants respectfully disagree. Each of claims 4, 7, 9-10, and 12-14 recite additional method features. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that each dependent claim recites additional features with regard to the claims on which they depend, and thus are proper dependent claims.

CONCLUSION

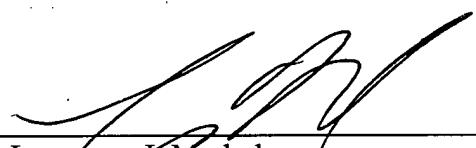
Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance, and an early notice to that effect is requested.

If any fees are due, the Commissioner is authorized to charge said fees to Meyertons, Hood, Kivlin, Kowert, & Goetzel, P.C. Deposit Account No. 501505/5760-22802/LJM.

Also enclosed herewith are the following items:

- Return Receipt Postcard
- Petition for Extension of Time
- Request for Approval of Drawing Changes
- Notice of Change of Address
- Fee Authorization Form authorizing a deposit account debit in the amount of \$ for fees ().
- Other:

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: 2/22/06